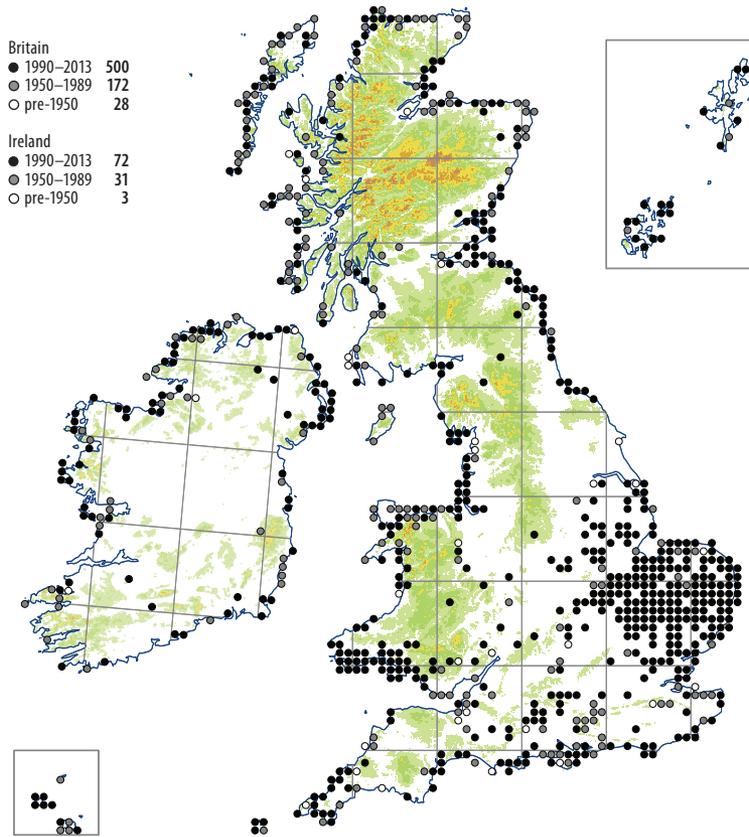


Syntrichia ruralis var. ruraliformis



The classic habitat of this moss is on sand dunes, where it is a colonist of loose sand on mobile and semi-stable dunes, often in abundance, and persists in fixed dune grassland. It also occurs at the edge of dune slacks and on sandy coastal banks and cliffs. Common associates include *Brachythecium albicans*, *Homalothecium lutescens* and *Hypnum cupressiforme* var. *lacunosum*. It is less common inland, occurring on open sandy ground (such as the East Anglian Breckland) and old sand pits, more rarely on stones, stony ground, rock outcrops and rooftops. In some districts it is occasional to frequent in ruderal habitats, often growing with var. *ruralis*, on light soils on verges, on gravelly roadsides and driveways, and sometimes on old tarmac and concrete. Altitudinal range: 0–345 m.

At the time of the 1991–1994 Atlas, var. *ruraliformis* was sparsely recorded inland. Better appreciation of its occurrence in ruderal habitats has led to a large increase in inland records, conspicuously so in East Anglia. It is probably less common in these habitats in central and western areas, but is doubtless under-recorded.

Dioicous; capsules are rather rare, mature in spring and summer.

It is distinguished from var. *ruralis* only by the shape of the leaf apex, and has been treated variously as a variety, subspecies or independent species. Intermediates occur and have not been recorded consistently. Where identified as such by recorders they have been mapped here as var. *ruraliformis*.

European Southern-temperate. Throughout much of Europe, north to S Scandinavia, east to C European Russia. Macaronesia, N Africa. Cyprus, Turkey, Iran to Nepal. N America. Perhaps elsewhere, but not always recognised as distinct from var. *ruralis*.

T.L. Blockeel

